

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
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E. O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PEPR, SA , FR, SOPN
SUBJECT: SAUDI PAPER INTERVIEW MICHEL JOUBERT

1. AL-JAZIRAH OF JUNE 5 CARRIED TEXT OF LONG INTERVIEW WITH
FORMER FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER
MECHEL JOUBERT IN PARIS, DONE DURING KING KHALID'S RECENT
VISIT TO FRANCE. IN ADDITION TO DISCUSSING FRENCH DOMESTIC
POLITICS JOBERT ANSWERED QUESTIONS ABOUT US-SOVIET RELATIONS,
THE MIDDLE EAST, SADAT'S INITIATIVE, AND FRENCH-ARAB
RELATIONS.

2. ASKED ABOUT THE SOVIET ROLE IN AFRICA AND ELSEWHERE,
JOUBERT SAID HE DID NOT THINK THAT US WOULD TAKE A STRONG
STAND AGAINST CUBAN ACTIVITY IN ANGOLA. JOUBERT NOTED,
"THE MATTER IS IN CARTER'S HAND. HE IS CAPABLE OF REDIR-
ECTING EVENTS AND COULD, IF HE WANTED, SAY TO HIS SOVIET
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FRIENDS THAT MATTERS SHOULD BE HANDLED DIFFERENTLY."
ASKING RHETORICALLY WHY CARTER DOES NOT SPEAK TO THE SOV-
EITS, JOUBERT SYAS THAT THE REASON IS CARTER'S DETERMINATION
TO SIGN A SALT-3-- A MATTER OF MUCH GREATER IMPORTANCE THAN
AFRICA.

3. JOUBERT BELIEVES THAT MANY QUESTIONS ABOUT AFRICA AND

US-SOVIET RELATIONS WILL NOT BE DISCUSSED OPENLY BY THE PARTIES CONCERNED. "BUT I KNOW VERY WELL WHAT IS HAPPENING--WHAT CONCERNS THE US AND RUSSIA'S IS NOT SAUDI ARABIA, FRANCE, OR ANY COUNTRY IN THE THIRD WORLD. RATHER THEY ARE CONCERNED ONLY WITH PREVENTING A WAR BETWEEN THEM. EVERYTHING ELSE IS PERIPHERAL. THE PRESENCE OF CUBANS IN ANGOLA DOESN'T MAKE CARTER HAPPY, BUT FOR HIM IT IS NOT A CRUCIAL ISSUE. I ALSO SAY THAT CARTER DOESN'T CARE WHETHER MOBUTU REMAINS IN POWER OR NOT, AND IN FACT MAY HAVE PREFERRED HIM OUT OF POWER YEARS AGO."

4. ASKED ABOUT SADAT'S INITIATIVE, JOUBERT CALLS IT "SUICIDAL" AND SAYS HE CONSIDERS ITS EFFECTS IN CHANGING AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION VERY IMPORTANT. "FOR SADAT KNOWS THAT HE WILL NOT HAVE PEACE UNTIL HE SATISFIES AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION. FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST LIES IN THE CONGRESS." ANSWERING ANOTHER QUESTION ABOUT SADAT AND HIS INITIATIVE, JOUBERT SAID, "I WAS CERTAIN AND I SAID THAT HE WILL NOT SUCCEED AND TODAY I SAY THAT ONE RESULT OF THE VISIT WAS TO MOVE AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION--AND THAT IS CONSIDERABLE."

5. ASKED TO COMMENT ON KING KHALID'S VISIT TO FRANCE, JOUBERT SAID THAT REALISTIC FRENCHMEN KNOW THAT FRANCE CANNOT TAKEOVER AMERICA'S STATUS AND UNSHAKABLE RELATIONS WITH THE KINGDOM. BUT HE ADDED THAT THESE RELATIONS, WHICH

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GO BACK TO THE THIRTIES, "SHOULD NOT PREVENT FRANCE AND OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES FROM HAVING STRONG RELATIONS AND THE ARAB WORLD AND THE KINGDOM. THIS IS A MATTER THAT KISSINGER DID NOT UNDERSTAND WELL. HE INTERPRETED FRANCE'S DESIRE FOR COOPERATION WITH SAUDI ARABIA AND THE ARAB WORLD AS AN ATTEMPT TO FREEZE OUT THE UNITED STATES. IN THOSE DAYS I TOLD HIM THAT IT WAS IN AMERICA'S INTEREST, SAUDI ARABIA'S INTEREST, AND THE ARABS' INTEREST TO DIVERSIFY AND EXPAND THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE WEST. AND THIS IS WHAT YOUR COUNTRY (SAUDI ARABIA) IS DOING. I KNOW THAT IT IS POSSIBLE TO COOPERATE IN ALL FIELDS, ESPECIALLY BECAUSE THE KINGDOM FOLLOWS A WISE POLICY STABILIZING THE LEVEL OF OIL PRICES AND PRODUCTION."

6. COMMENT: IT IS INTERSTING THAT SAUDI PRESS REPORTED JOUBERT'S REMARK THAT US IS NOT ULTIMATELY CONCERNED WITH SAUDI ARABIA IN DETERMINING ITS AFRICAN POLICY. ALTHOUGH MANY SAUDI OFFICIALS BELIEVE THAT US IS IGNORING ITS FRIENDS IN THE REGION TO THE DETRIMENT OF ITS OWN INTERESTS, THEY HAVE NOT SAID SO PUBLICLY. NOR HAS THE PRESS TAKEN SUCH A LINE, BUT RATHER HAS CONFINED ITSELF TO ATTACKING COMMUNIST SCHEMES IN AFRICA AND CRITI-

CIZING AMERICAN INACTION ONLY BY IMPLICATION.

WEST

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